

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: SURVEY OF VOTER ATTITUDES IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES

SUMMARY: A RECENT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT-SPONSORED SURVEY, IN WHICH AT LEAST A MODERATE LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE CAN BE PLACED, INDICATES A SURPRISINGLY LOW LEVEL OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE TURBULENT BASQUE PROVINCES (VIZCAYA, GUIPUZCOA, ALAVA, AND NAVARRA), AND SUGGESTS THAT ECONOMIC ISSUES MAY BE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUESTIONS OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY. ONLY THE BASQUE NATIONALIST PARTY (PNV) AND SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (PSOE) SEEM TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT IN THE REGION.
END SUMMARY.

1. THE SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT "TEAM" COMMISSIONED THE FIRM "DATA" TO DO A NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF VOTER ATTITUDES, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF PROF. JUAN LINZ OF YALE UNIVERSITY. THE POLL RESULTS WERE THEN USED TO PREPARE A REPORT SPECIFICALLY FOR THE BASQUE REGION, AT THE REQUEST OF THE PNV. A COPY OF THIS REPORT WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO AMCONSUL BILBAO, WHO PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING SYNTHESIS AND COMMENTS.

2. SAMPLE SIZE. 1,150 PEOPLE FROM THE FOUR BASQUE PROVINCES WERE SURVEYED. THE NUMBER IS LARGE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE A GOOD SAMPLE OF THE REGION AS A WHOLE. HOWEVER, OVER HALF (750) OF
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THIS NUMBER WAS TAKEN FROM VIZCAYA. THE SAMPLING FOR VIZCAYA IS THUS PROBABLY TRUSTWORTHY, BUT THE SMALLER SAMPLE FROM GUIPUZCOA AND THE MINUSCULE ONES FROM NAVARRA AND ALAVA RENDER THE RESULTS FOR THOSE PROVINCES CORRESPONDINGLY SUSPECT. WHILE THE SURVEY'S VALIDITY IS THUS FAR FROM TOTAL, THE LOCAL ANALYSTS FOUND IT WORTHWHILE TO WRITE 30 PAGES OF COMMENTARY (PLUS 5 PAGES OF CRITICISM AND DOUBTS).

3. BASIC VOTER ATTITUDES--AUTONOMY. TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTION TO SPAIN'S REGIONAL PROBLEM WAS A CONTINUED UNITARY SPANISH STATE, SOME LIMITED AUTONOMY, A FULLY FEDERAL SPAIN, OR COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE, 16 PERCENT OF VIZCAYANS FAVORED THE FIRST, 46 PERCENT THE SECOND, 17 PERCENT THE THIRD, AND 14 PERCENT THE LAST. THESE FIGURES WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL FOR THE BASQUE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE (16, 47, 16, 13), AS WELL AS, ALMOST INCREDIBLY, FOR THE ENTIRETY OF SPAIN (16, 47, 16, 13). GUIPUZCOA WAS MORE IN FAVOR OF RADICAL REVOLUTION, ALAVA AND NAVARRA LESS SO.

4. BASIC VOTER ATTITUDES--POLITICS AND ECONOMICS. BOTH MARXISM AND FRANCOISM DREW ONLY A 10 PERCENT FAVORABLE RESPONSE; 61 PERCENT REJECT THE FORMER AND 56 PERCENT THE LATTER. ALTHOUGH AN ALLIANCE WITH THE USA IS SIX TIMES MORE POPULAR THAN ONE WITH RUSSIA (23 PERCENT-4 PERCENT), IT IS ONLY HALF AS POPULAR AS THE IDEA OF MAINTAINING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BOTH (42 PERCENT). "SOCIALISM" DRAWS THE SUPPORT OF 50 PERCENT, WHILE PRIVATE PROPERTY IS FAVORED BY ONLY 17 PERCENT. BOTH MONOPLY CAPITALISM (7 PERCENT) AND COMPLETE STATE OWNERSHIP (7 PERCENT) FIND LITTLE FAVOR, WHILE WORKER-MANAGED ENTERPRISE (42 PERCENT) AND ENTERPRISE WITH CONTROL SHARED BETWEEN WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT (41 PERCENT) WERE MUCH MORE POPULAR. 63 PERCENT PREFER A SYSTEM OF SEPARATE LABOR UNIONS AS OPPOSED TO ONE OVERALL SYNDICAL STRUCTURE. THE TWO FEATURES MOST STRONGLY DESIRED IN UNIONS ARE NONCOMPULSORY MEMBERSHIP (75 PERCENT) AND THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM POLITICAL PARTIES (77 PERCENT). THE MAJORITY CONSIDER THEIR POLITICAL TENDENCY TO BE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (13 PERCENT).

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PERCENT. SOCIAL DEMOCRAT (16 PERCENT), OR SOCIALIST (22 PERCENT). 11 PERCENT ARE TO THE RIGHT OF THIS GROUP, 5 PERCENT TO THE LEFT, 9 PERCENT HAVE NO TENDENCY, AND THE REMAINDER DIDN'T REPLY. COMMUNISM IS FLATLY REJECTED BY 54 PERCENT.

5. BASIC VOTER ATTITUDES--THE CHURCH. SLIGHTLY OVER A THIRD THOUGHT THAT PRIESTS SHOULD INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS, WHILE SLIGHTLY LESS THAN A THIRD THOUGHT THAT CHURCHES SHOULD BE USED FOR POLITICAL MEETINGS OR THAT THE CHURCH AS SUCH SHOULD OFFER OPINIONS ON POLITICAL PARTIES.

6. POLITICAL PARTY RECOGNITION. ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY, SOME 70 PERCENT OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE BASQUE PROVINCES SAY THEY HAVE ALMOST NO IDEA OF WHAT IS HAPPENING POLITICALLY, AND SOME 20 PERCENT SAY THEY HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY POLITICAL PARTY WHATSOEVER. (NAVARRA AND ALAVA HAVE 37 PERCENT AND 41 PERCENT IGNORANCE RATES RESPECTIVELY.) THE BEST-KNOWN "PARTY" IS THE TERRORIST GROUP ETA V (67 PERCENT). THE PSOE AND PNV ARE NECK AND NECK WITH 66 PERCENT AND 65 PERCENT; FAR LEFT LCR-ETA VI

AND MCE ARE KNOWN TO SLIGHTLY MORE THAN HALF, AND FAR RIGHT FUREZA NUEVA BY SLIGHTLY LESS. THE PSP AND CARLISTS ARE KNOWN TO 41 PERCENT.

7. POLITICAL PARTY PROSPECTS. ONLY 46 PERCENT EXPRESSED ANY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE. THE PSOE AND THE PNV ARE THE ONLY TWO PARTIES WITH ANY SERIOUS DEGREE OF SUPPORT (17 PERCENT FOR EACH), WITH THE PNV DOING BETTER BUT NOT OVERWHELMINGLY SO AMONG VGTERS OF BASQUE ORIGIN, JUST LESS THAN HALF OF THE BASQUE PROVINCES' INHABITANTS. A VERY INTERESTING STATISTIC IS THAT ISSUES SUCH AS BETTER SALARIES AND WORKER BENEFITS AND GREATER SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT ARE CONSIDERED THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES BY AROUND HALF OF THE ELECTORATE, WHEREAS THE QUESTION OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY IS CONSIDERED OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE BY ONLY 25 PERCENT (36 PERCENT AMONG BASQUES).

8. POSSIBLE CANDIDATES. THE SURVEY CHECKED BOTH VOTER RECOG-
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NITION OF AND WILLINGNESS TO VOTE FOR 15 POLITICAL LEADERS (5 OF NATIONAL STANDING, 5 FROM THE PNV, AND 5 OTHER LOCAL LUMINARIES). THE NATIONAL LEADERS, SUCH AS ADOLFO SUAREZ (91 PERCENT), SANTIAGO CARRILLO (83 PERCENT), AND TIerno GALVAN (62 PERCENT), WERE MUCH BETTER KNOWN THAN THE PNV MEN, OF WHOM F. LEIZAOLA (NEPHEW OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE BASQUE GOVT IN EXILE) HAD THE HIGHEST RECOGNITION FACTOR (31 PERCENT). ONLY SUAREZ WAS AN OVERWHELMING FAVORITE. 24 PERCENT SAID THEY WOULD VOTE FOR HIM -- TWICE THE NUMBER SUPPORTING HIS CLOSEST COMPETITOR, TIerno GALVAN. THE PNV LEADERS GENERALLY DID AS WELL AS THE OTHER NATIONAL FIGURES AND BETTER THAN THE OTHER IMPORTANT LOCALS. JAVIER ARZALLUZ (8 PERCENT) WAS THE PARTY'S MOST POPULAR. MOREOVER, HE WAS THE PNV STANDOUT AMONG NON-BASQUES AND YOUNGER VOTERS, WHICH ARE TWO AREAS OF COMPARATIVE PNV WEAKNESS.

9. EMBASSY COMMENT: AS AMCONSUL BILBAO NOTES IN THE CASE OF THE REGIONAL ISSUE IN PARTICULAR -- WHERE SUPPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OPTION IS QUITE LOW -- THE RESULTS OF THIS POLL ARE, SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH THOSE OBTAINED BY SIMILAR POLLS IN THE REST OF SPAIN. EVEN INCLUDING THE LARGE PERCENTAGE WITH NO EXPRESSED POLITICAL PREFERENCE. NOTWITHSTANDING THE PNV'S MODEST LEVEL OF EXPRESSED SUPPORT, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE PARTY'S POLITICAL ECLECTICISM AND FIRMLY PLANTED ROOTS, THAT IT WILL WIN A STRONG PLURALITY AND CONCEIVABLY EVEN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE FOUR BASQUE PROVINCES. STABLER

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